

# NEWS RELEASE

## Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project

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### Proposed Action and public meeting for Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project

Flagstaff AZ – The City of Flagstaff and Coconino National Forest are excited to announce the release of the Proposed Action (PA) for the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP). To celebrate this event and participate in the formal scoping process, the public is invited to attend an Open House on Wednesday May 1<sup>st</sup>, from 6:00 – 8:00 pm, at the City Aquaplex at 1702 N 4<sup>th</sup> St, Flagstaff AZ 86004. Staff will be present to discuss the project, show maps and displays, and answer questions.

The Notice of Intent (NOI) is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register tomorrow, April 11, which will mark the beginning of the 30-day Scoping Period. The PA is available on the Coconino National Forest website at [www.fs.usda.gov/projects/coconino/landmanagement/projects](http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/coconino/landmanagement/projects).

“It’s important to remember that at this point nothing is set in stone,” says Mike Elson, District Ranger for the Flagstaff Ranger. “The feedback we get is vital for identifying concerns and developing alternatives as we move forward with our analysis.”

The City and Forest have been hard at work on the FWPP since November 2012, when Flagstaff voters approved a \$10 million bond to fund forest treatments designed to reduce the risk of severe fire and post-fire flooding over approximately 13,500 acres in the Rio de Flag and Upper Lake Mary Watersheds.

“This is a historic and unique project,” says Paul Summerfelt, who is serving as the Project Manager for the City of Flagstaff. “We are charting new paths with this approach.”

In addition to a non-traditional funding source, the proposal includes a combination of treatments including prescribed burning and thinning, which could be implemented using traditional methods as well as cable or helicopter logging. “One of the reasons this project is so unique is that we can consider treatment methods for the steep, inaccessible slopes that we haven’t been able to use in this area before,” says Elson.

The PA also includes the temporary creation of 15.5 miles of roads to facilitate timber removal, decommissioning approximately 34 miles of roads, and instituting a permanent campfire ban in the Dry Lake Hills area. “In 2011 we implemented a temporary fire ban in the swath of land between the City boundary and the San Francisco Peaks Wilderness,” says Elson. “Due to topography, fuels, public safety concerns, and values at risk in this particular area, we think it makes sense to make that fire ban permanent.”

A link to the PA can also be found on the FWPP website at [www.flagstaffwatershedprotection.org](http://www.flagstaffwatershedprotection.org).

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